

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 KABUL 03934 01 OF 02 150942Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----103263 150946Z /10  
O 150825Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8007

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 KABUL 3934

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GFG  
TAGS: SHUM, AF  
SUBJECT: CRITICAL HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION IN AFGHANISTAN

REF: KABUL 3933

1. REFTTEL OUTLINES THE ARRESTS AND EXECUTIONS BEING WIDELY REPORTED AS CARRIED OUT BY THE NEW REGIME IN AFGHANISTAN. UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES, IN MY VIEW, CAN WE OR SHOULD WE IGNORE THESE EVENTS. THEY REPRESENT GROSS VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS. WE IGNORE THEM ONLY IF WE ARE WILLING TO OVERLOOK OUR OWN HUMAN RIGHTS PRINCIPLES. THE QUESTION IS NOT WHETHER WE DO SOMETHING -- BUT WHAT WE DO.

2. GIVEN ITS IDEOLOGICAL BACKGROUND, THE NEW REGIME IS UNLIKELY TO BE EASILY SWAYED BY REPRESENTATIONS FROM US ON BEHALF OF AFGHANS WHO IT CONSIDERS REPRESENT A "TYRANNICAL, DESPOTIC ARISTOCRACY". MOREOVER, THE ACTIONS THE REGIME IS TAKING AGAINST THESE PEOPLE ACCORD WITH AN AFGHAN CULTURAL TRADITION WHICH INCLUDES A STRONG ADHERENCE TO THE CONCEPT OF REVENGE. THE NEW LEADERS OF AFGHANISTAN, IN PERSECURING MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY OF THE "NADERI DYNASTY," ARE, BY THEIR LIGHTS, AVENGING 50 YEARS OF PERSECUTION AND MISRULE. THEY SEE FORMER GOVERNMENT LEADERS WHO SERVED THAT DYNASTY IN THE SAME LIGHT.  
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3. I ALSO CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT WE SHOULD NOT MAKE REPRESENTATIONS ON BEHALF OF SPECIFIC INDIVIDUALS. SUCH REPRESENTATIONS MIGHT CAUSE THE NEW LEADERSHIP TO SUSPECT THAT WE HAVE SPECIAL TIES WITH SUCH PEOPLE AND WOULD INCREASE THE DANGER TO THE PEOPLE INVOLVED.

4. THE ONLY PRACTICAL COURSE FOR US, THEN, IS TO MAKE GENERAL REPRESENTATIONS IN THE HOPE THAT THE NEW REGIME WILL CARE ENOUGH ABOUT ITS INTERNATIONAL REPUTATION, AND ENOUGH ABOUT MAINTAINING THE FIG LEAF OF NONALIGNMENT THROUGH GOOD RELATIONS WITH US, TO RELENT FROM THE HARSH TREATMENT IT IS METING OUT TO SOME OF ITS PERCEIVED ENEMIES. TO HAVE ANY CHANCE OF BEING EFFECTIVE OUR REPRESENTATIONS MUST BE TO CHAIRMAN TARAKI HIMSELF.

5. WE SHOULD ALSO CONSIDER ALERTING ORGANIZATIONS LIKE AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL TO THE SITUATION HERE. INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION MIGHT HAVE SOME EFFECT ON TARAKI AND COMPANY. THE DEPARTMENT CAN JUDGE FAR BETTER THAN I HOW TO GO ABOUT AROUSING INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC OPINION. I WOULD ONLY SUGGEST THAT IT BE DONE IN A WAY THAT IT NOT BE SEEN HERE AS PURELY AMERICAN PRESSURE.

6. AS FOR AN APPROACH BY US TO TARAKI, I SEE TWO POSSIBILITIES:

A. I COULD SEEK A MEETING UNDER INSTRUCTIONS. I WOULD TELL HIM THAT THE USG IS GREATLY CONCERNED AND ALARMED BY REPORTS REACHING US FROM A NUMBER OF SOURCES THAT HIS GOVERNMENT IS EXECUTING SOME FORMER OFFICIALS AND IMPRISONING A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE, INCLUDING WOMEN AND CHILDREN, WITHOUT, AS FAR AS CAN BE SEEN, DUE PROCESS OF CONFIDENTIAL

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LAW. I WOULD REMIND HIM OF OUR FIRST CONVERSATION TOUCHING ON HUMAN RIGHTS (KABUL 3619) AND SAY THAT IT IS NOT OUR BUSINESS TO JUDGE WHETHER GIVEN INDIVIDUALS HAVE COMMITTED CRIMES PUNISHABLE UNDER AFGHAN LAWAN BUT THAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE LEGAL PROCESSES BEING USED AND ABOUT REPORTS OF PUNISHMENT OF SEEMINGLY COMPLETELY INNOCENT PEOPLE SUCH AS WOMEN AND CHILDREN. I WOULD ADD THAT THE USG, AS I HAVE TOLD HIM BEFORE, WANTS TO HAVE CLOSE AND FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH HIS GOVERNMENT, BUT THAT WE ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THE POSSIBLE EFFECT ON AMERICAN PUBLIC OPINION AND HENCE ON OUR RELATIONS OF REPORTED VIOLATIONS OF BASIC HUMAN RIGHTS.

B. ANOTHER APPROACH WOULD BE TO HAVE ME DELIVER A WRITTEN OR ORAL MEEEEAGE TO TARAKI FROM PRESIDENT CARTER. I STRONGLY PREFER THIS APPROACH BECAUSE TARAKI WOULD BE FLATTERED TO RECEIVE A MESSAGE FROM OUR PRESIDENT, AND OUR REPRESENTATIONS ON HUMAN RIGHTS WOULD LIKELY BE BETTER RECEIVED BY HIM. THE PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE COULD BEGIN BY WISHING TARAKI WELL AS HE ASSUMES THE BURDENS OF LEADERSHIP IN HIS COUNTRY AND IN HIS EFFORTS TO RAISE THE STANDARD OF LIVING OF THE PEOPLE OF AFGHANISTAN.

IT COULD REITERATE OUR TRADITIONAL POLICY OF SUPPORT  
FOR AFGHAN INDEPENDENCE AND REGIONAL PEACE AND STABILITY.  
IT COULD THEN TAKE UP THE MATTER OF HUMAN RIGHTS ALONG  
THE LINES OF PARA 6 (A) ABOVE.

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ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----103253 150944Z /10

O 150825Z MAY 78  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8008

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 KABUL 3934

EXDIS

7. WHATEVER WE DO, I THINK THE SITUATION IS URGENT  
BECAUSE THE LIVES OF MANY PEOPLE ARE CURRENTLY AT STAKE.  
AS THE DEPARTMENT IS AWARE FROM PREVIOUS EXCHANGES ON  
THIS SUBJECT I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED TO TAKE THIS SUBJECT  
UP WITH THE NEW REGIME IN THE COMPANY OF THE ENTIRE  
DIPLOMATIC CORPS. MY COLLEAGUES WILL NOT AGREE TO MAKE  
A JOINT REPRESENTATION, AND THEREFORE WE HAVE NO CHOICE  
BUT TO PROCEED ON OUR OWN AS AT LEAST ONE OF THEM (A MUSLIM)  
HAS ALREADY DONE WITH SOME SUCCESS.

8. I ALSO DO NOT THINK IT ADVISABLE AT THIS STATE TO  
LINK OUR HUMAN RIGHTS CONCERNS WITH OUR AID PROGRAM HERE.  
TARAKI WOULD TAKE ANY SUCH LINKAGE AS A THREAT AND SUCH  
A LINKAGE WOULD THEREFORE GREATLY DAMAGE OUR HUMAN  
RIGHTS CASE WITH HIM. MOREOVER, OUR AID PROGRAM IS  
IMPORTANT TO US BOTH IN TERMS OF ENCOURAGING AFGHAN  
NONALIGNMENT AND IN TERMS OF HELPING SOME OF THE  
WORLD'S POOREST PEOPLE.

9. TO CONCLUDE, LET ME SAY THAT THIS IS SUCH A SENSITIVE  
AND IMPORTANT MATTER THAT I CERTAINLY DO NOT FEEL I  
HAVE A MONOPOLY OF WISDOM ON HOW TO PROCEED. HOW IT IS  
HANDLED COULD HAVE CONSIDERABLE EFFECT ON OUR FUTURE  
RELATIONS WITH THE NEW AFGHAN REGIME. I WOULD APPRECIATE  
RECEIVING INSTRUCTIONS PROMPTLY.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014